

ON THE OCCURRENCE OF *CREPIDULA FORNICATA* IN ESSEX.

By WALTER CROUCH, F.Z.S.

*Read July 14th, 1893.*

ON the 6th September, 1891, when collecting at Stone Point, St. Osyth, on the river Colne, I found a broken piece of oyster-shell to which was attached a dead specimen of *C. fornicata*. This form is common enough on the east coast of North America, but I had never seen any record of its occurrence on our shores. On enquiry I ascertained that young American oysters had been laid down to fatten in this locality, and concluded that this non-European shell had been thus introduced. I thought it well, however, to record the fact in the "Essex Naturalist," December, 1891.

On the 4th March, 1893, I received a small parcel of marine objects from the river Crouch, over 16 miles from the first mentioned locality, taken by one of our trawling companions, John Bacon, whilst engaged in the oyster fishery, on board a Burnham smack; and amongst these was a *living* example of this species, which in his letter to me he called "a crow-oyster on a stone."

In reply to my request for further information he told me that he had seen these in different parts of the Crouch and Roach rivers, and remembered them for 15 or 20 years; but that they were scarce; and that he had never heard of any American spat or young oysters being placed in any of these layings.

In April he found two more living specimens on oysters at the ferry layings, Cricksea. One of these he sent to me on the 15th April; it died a few hours after, but I showed the shell with the animal still in it to Mr. Edgar A. Smith the next day. The shell is very concave, and rich in colour inside, the septum being enamel-white.

The soft parts of the other specimen were not preserved, but the shell given to me later on by Mr. E. A. Fitch is much flatter and larger, and the internal colour is more mottled.

All these shells exhibit considerable variability in size, shape, and colouring, but compare with specimens from North America.

The live oysters on which these latter specimens were found are not *natives*, but French oysters laid down when a year old.

[Since the above was read, Mr. H. Wallis Kew has kindly drawn my attention to the (Yorkshire) "Naturalist," 1888, p. 275; wherein Mr. Arthur Smith records the occurrence of *dead* shells on the beach at Grimsby in 1887-8; and says they are often found adhering to the shells of oysters brought from America, and laid down at Cleethorpe.

This is again mentioned by Mr. Kew in his "Shells of the Lincolnshire Coast," Nat. 1889, pp. 358-9.]